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IDENTIFIERS	*First Week of School; *Project MET

ABSTRACT

This model was designed to help elementary school teachers to plan effectively for the first day and first week of school. It was developed by the Fairfax County (Virginia) School System as a part of their Management for Effective Teaching (MET) Project, which was planned and implemented to answer the need expressed by teachers, principals, and other educational personnel for resources to manage more effectively the school system's Program of Studies. Six areas are identified on the model as important considerations in planning: (1) routines; (2) climate; (3) physical environment; (4) diagnosis; (5) home communication; and (6) learning activities. A chart offers examples of two teacher's first day/first week planning ideas for each of these areas. (JD)

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FIRST DAY/ FIRST WEEK PLANNING MODEL

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MET

Management for Effective Teaching

Will student achievement increase if teachers devote more time to instruction? While research suggests this is the case, most teachers realize raising achievement isn't as simple as increasing the amount of time devoted to a subject. Some recent research suggests a more complex relationship between time and student learning; these findings include:

- Teachers set the tone for the entire year during the first days of school.
- Teachers who analyze and plan for students' concerns and information needs are more effective managers.
- Teachers who immediately establish and teach classroom procedures, rules, and standards run classes in which more time is devoted to instruction throughout the year.

The First Day/First Week Planning Model is based on research and has been developed to help teachers more effectively plan for this critical time in the school year.

FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Department of Instructional Services
Office of Elementary Education

SP 020 481

FIRST DAY/FIRST WEEK PLANNING MODEL

Uniqueness of Planning for the First Day and Week

Planning for the first day and first week of the school year is different in many ways from planning that teachers do later in the year when instructional groups and routines are well-established. At the beginning of the school year students arrive with mixed feelings of anticipation and apprehension. It is important to analyze and carefully plan to focus on student concerns and information needs, rules, and routines. This may result in a more productive learning environment for the entire year. It is also important to have students involved in active learning, carefully planned to have them experience success in learning right away.

Figure 1 shows a model developed by Project MET to facilitate teachers' planning at the beginning of the school year.

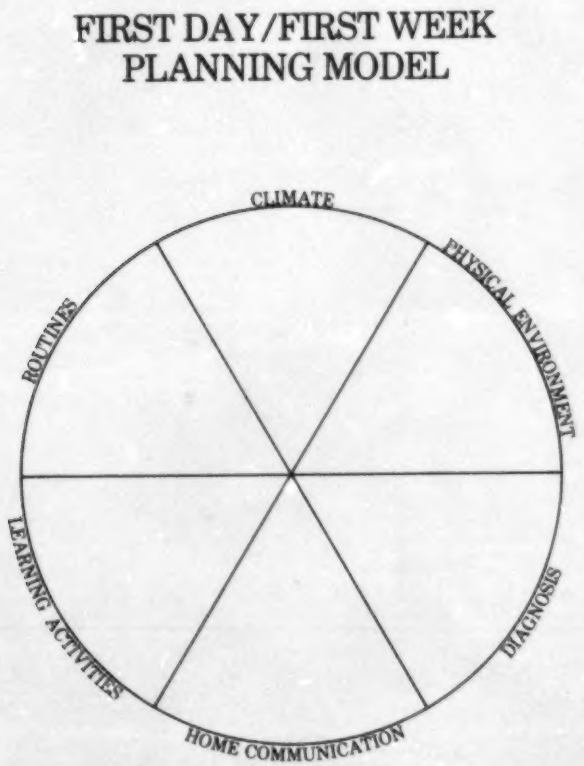

Figure 1: First Day/First Week Planning Model

Definition of Terms Used in the Model

The six areas identified on the model as important considerations in planning are: routines, climate, physical environment, diagnosis, home communications, and learning activities.

To clarify these terms, the following definitions and selected examples are given:

Routines--Recurring activities that become established in the classroom as predictable administrative or instructional sequences. (Examples: taking roll, moving in groups, using centers, and completing work assignments.)

Climate--Atmosphere or "personality" of the classroom, analogous to the personality of an individual. (Examples of classroom climate factors: caring, rules, respect, trust, pride, group cohesiveness, decision-making, communication, responsibility, reward system, and active learning.)

Physical Environment--Design of classroom space through arrangement of material resources. (Examples: furniture, books, centers, supplies, bulletin boards and other resources and equipment.)

Diagnosis--Teacher observation of student behavior in informal as well as structured activities. (Examples: observation of work habits, social skills and attitudes, and performance on reading a graded word list.)

Home Communication--Written, oral, and indirect messages exchanged by the teacher and a student's parents or guardian. (Examples: letters, supply lists, forms; indirect communication, such as ending the day with a discussion "what did we learn today?")

Learning Activities--Teacher-directed lessons and structured small group or independent learning activities. (Examples: a unit or lessons to acquire and use information in a variety of ways, (listening, interviews, film strips) with minimal requirements for reading at grade level.)

How to Use the Model

The model provides space for jotting down six categories of planning ideas, such as classroom routines that can minimize interruptions and student frustration. There is also space on the model to note planning ideas for learning activities, home-school communication, and for a positive classroom climate with workable classroom rules.

The following are suggestions for using the model:

1. Use the large (11" x 17") blank planning sheets located in the Management Support Kit folder entitled "First Day/First Week Planning."

2. Generate planning ideas about each of the six planning categories. Consider some of the following ideas.

   - what research suggests
   - personal learnings from past teaching experiences
   - goals for the students
   - priority needs of students during the beginning of school

3. Jot down planning ideas in each section of the chart. Identify the essential tasks and activities and highlight them.

4. Consider creating a small circle in the center of the large circle for plans that have schoolwide implications, such as school rules and routines.

Examples of First Day/First Week Planning

Two examples provided by two FCPS teachers (Figures 2 and 3) show how they used the First Day/First Week Planning Model.

Primary Teacher's Planning

Figure 2 is a reduced copy of the plans developed by a primary teacher. The section of the chart for routines, for example, indicates that the teacher has planned how lunch count will be handled, where personal belongings will be stored, and how students will move as a group at various times during the day. On the climate section, the teacher has noted important details, such as remembering to smile.

Upper Grade Teacher's Planning

An upper grade teacher's planning ideas for teaching during the first day and week are shown in Figure 3. The learning activities section of the chart contains a brief outline of plans for a unit on careers[1] for the first week. The plans for climate[2] indicate that the teacher will stress rules, goals, and foster an "our classroom" attitude.

The broken lines on the model create an inner circle for plans that have school wide implications--routines, climate, physical environment, and home communications. When students go out of the classroom to other places in the school they need to know where things are and what the routines are; for example, going to and from lunch, bus, physical education, or other special classes.

FIRST DAY/FIRST WEEK PLANNING MODEL

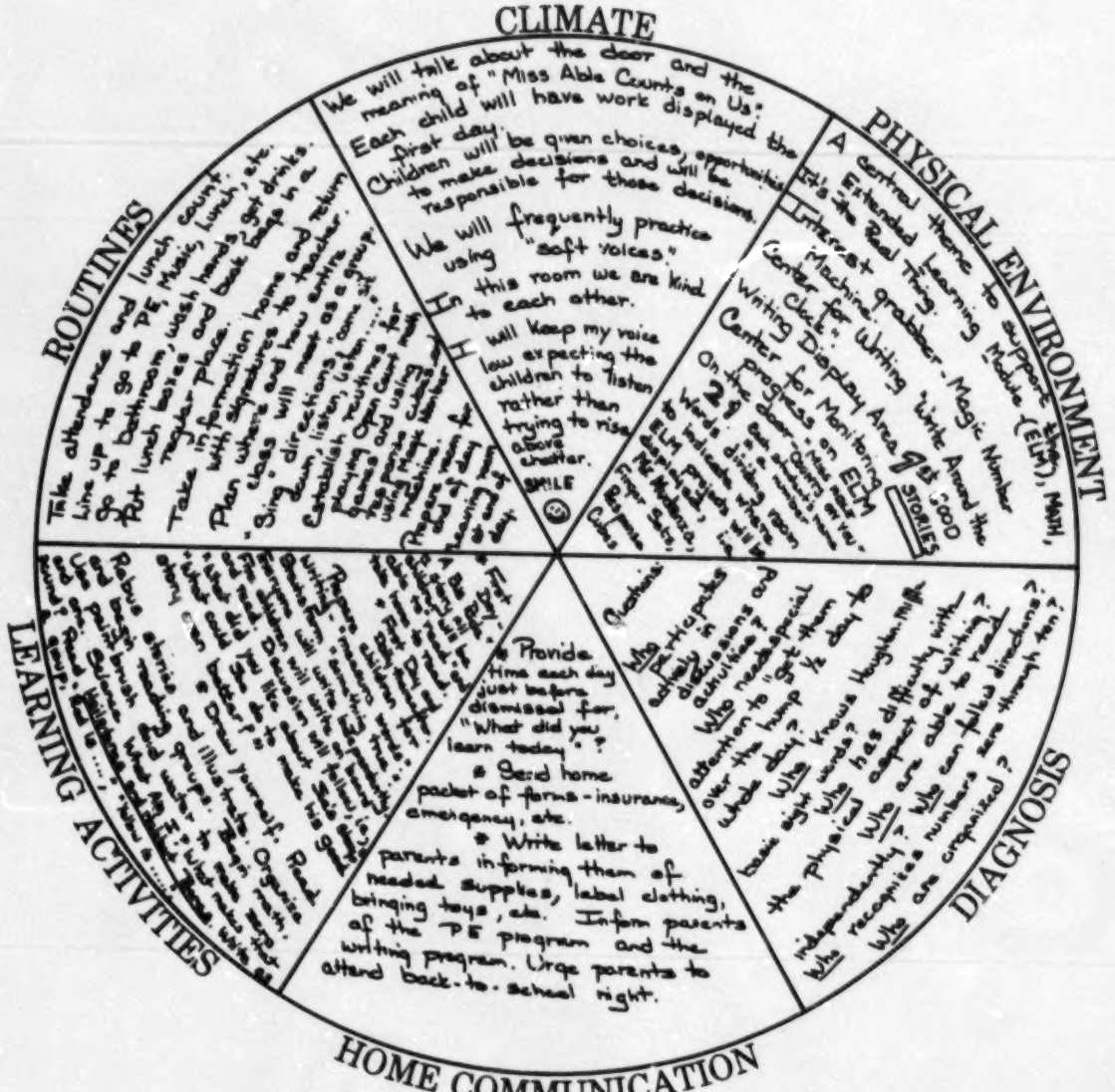
CLIMATE
We will talk about the door and the meaning of "Miss Able Counts on Us."
Each child will have work displayed the first day.
Children will be given choices, opportunities to make decisions and will be responsible for those decisions.
We will frequently practice using "soft voices."
In this room we are kind to each other.
I will keep my voice low expecting the children to listen rather than trying to raise above chatter.
SMILE
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT
A central theme to support the Extended Learning Module (ELM), Math, "It's the Real Thing."
Interest grabber - Magic Number Machine. Writing "Write Around the Center for Writing Display Area "Get Good Stories" Clock."
Writing Center for Monitoring progress on ELM
DIAGNOSIS
Questions:
Who participates actively in discussions and activities?
Who needs special attention to "get them over the hump" during the whole day?
Who knows Houghton-Mifflin basic sight words?
Who has difficulty with the physical aspect of writing?
Who are able to read independently?
Who can follow directions?
Who recognizes numbers zero through ten?
Who are organized?
HOME COMMUNICATION
* Provide time each day just before dismissal for, "What did you learn today?"
* Send home packet of forms - insurance, emergency, etc.
* Write letter to parents informing them of needed supplies, label clothing, bringing toys, etc. Inform parents of the PE program and the writing program. Urge parents to attend back-to-school night.
LEARNING ACTIVITIES
ROUTINES
Take attendance and lunch count.
Line up to go to PE, Music, lunch, etc.
Go to bathroom, wash hands, get drinks.
Put lunch boxes and book bags in regular places.
Take information home and return with signatures.
Plan where and how entire group will meet as a group.
Establish routines for getting supplies, putting them away, and using them.
Establish routines for getting attention, listening, following directions, etc.
Sing, "Good Morning to You."

Figure 2: Sample Plans Developed by Primary Teacher for First Day/First Week

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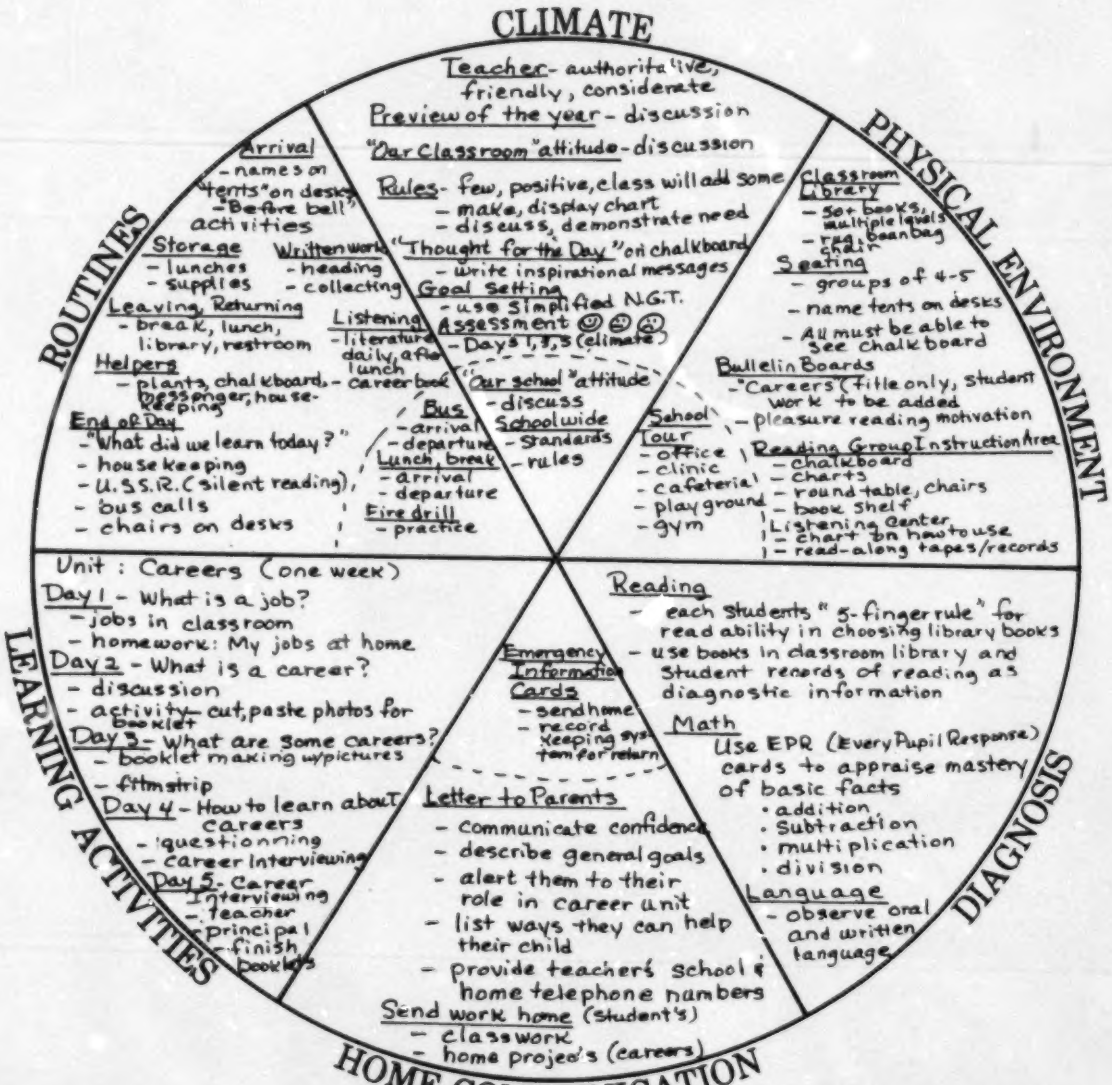

Figure 3: Sample Plans Developed by Upper Grade Teacher for First Day/First Week

FOOTNOTES

[1] An excerpt of the unit on careers is in the Management Support Kit folder for Daily/Weekly Planning.

[2] Additional help in planning for a wholesome classroom climate is provided in the Management Support Kit folder on classroom climate. The folder contains a brief discussion about classroom climate and a practical planning sheet for teachers to use to note their own plans.

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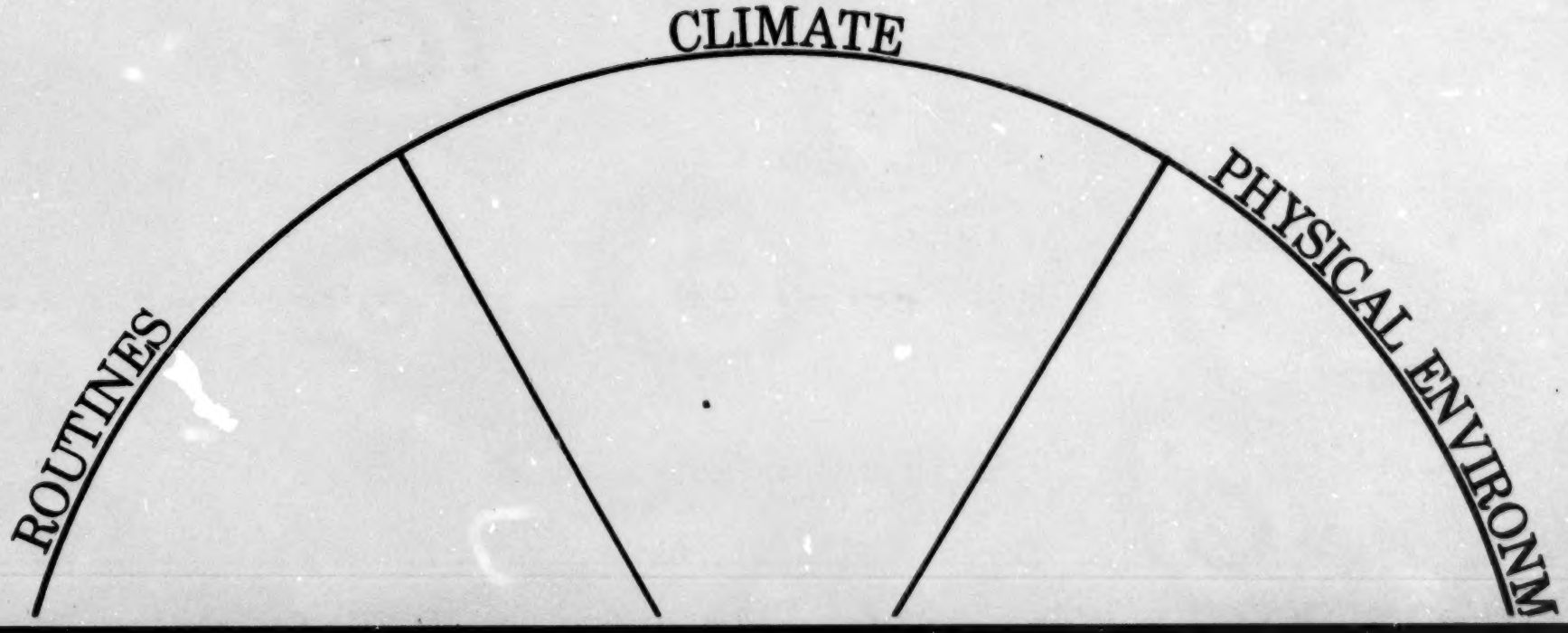

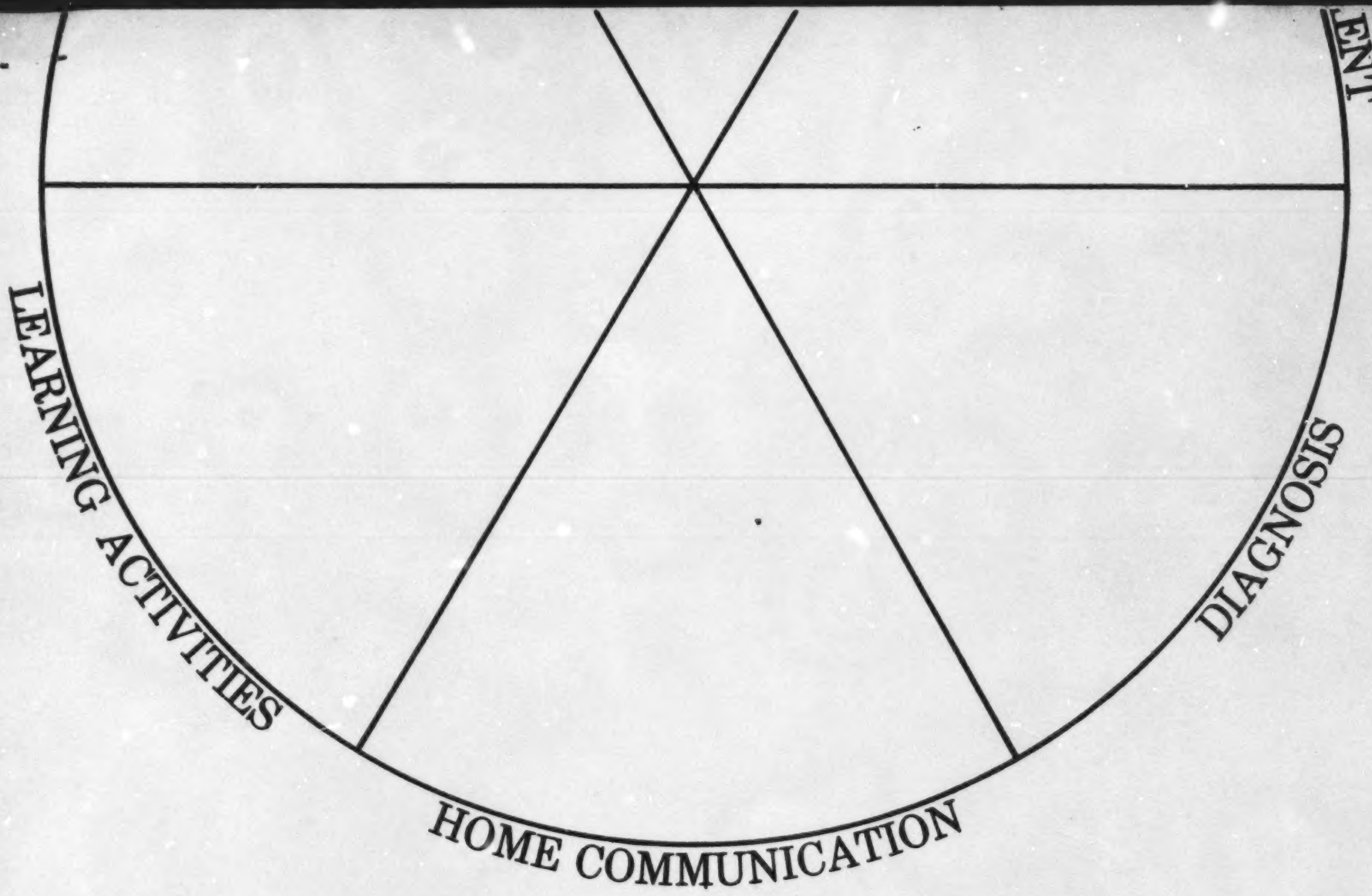

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